



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER
NANCY FLOREEN

MARCH 18, 2008

Chairman Conway, Vice Chair Proctor, and Members of the Appropriations Committee

For the record, I am Nancy Floreen, At-Large member of the Montgomery County Council and Chair of the Council's Transportation and Environment Committee. I am testifying again today, as I have so many times before, on the need to protect the Transportation Trust Fund.

The Transportation Trust money reminds me of the rock in the myth of Sisyphus. Every year we think it will get to the top by finally becoming whole again only to have it roll back down once more.

During the early years of the last administration, the Governor removed \$315 million from the TTF as a temporary measure, with the payback promised at \$324.9 million. But guess what - \$211.9 million of that is still outstanding. Just think of the projects in your counties that went unfunded. Then another big hit came when the revenue slated to come from the General Fund for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Metro extension to Largo was instead taken from the Trust Fund. Every year we hoped the Fund would come back to its mark, but it was not to be.

Fast forward to 2008. There was a new plan to pay back \$85 million in FY09 and \$126.9 million in FY10 so the TTF could reach the top and be whole again. But back it will roll because that plan isn't going to happen. The recommendation now is to stretch the repayment out to FY12, with just \$53 million being repaid this year, and who knows how much if any will get in next year.

So I am here today to express my strong support for HB 1128. This bill is a much-needed vehicle (excuse the pun) to safeguard the Trust Fund. Without legislative protection and requirements, I am afraid the Trust Fund will never be safe but instead will always be a target for non-transportation related budget transfers. In other words, HB 1128 is a much-needed initiative to shield transportation funding. Every single jurisdiction in Maryland has unbuilt transit and road projects that need funding. We must stop the pilfering of this pot just because other needs or interests arise.

Although this legislation doesn't outright prohibit transfers from the fund, it does enable such diversion only for extraordinary fiscal circumstances and requires the payback schedule to begin immediately. This goes a long way to roll this essential fund to the top of the hill.

100 MARYLAND AVENUE • ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850
240/777-7959 • TTY 240/777-7914 • FAX 240/777-7989
Councilmember.Floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov
www.montgomerycountymd.gov